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Porcelain, Pottery & Glass.

CHINA PAINTING—II.

By
Mrs. N. R. Monachesi.

In selecting colors there is a choice of those that come ready prepared and in tubes, and those that are still in powder form and in vials. They each have advantages, the cost being about equal. The tube colors are certainly very convenient, and are always ready for use by squeezing out a trifle; while, on the other hand, if allowed to remain undisturbed for any length of time, the color becomes hard and unmanageable and had better be discarded altogether. The powders, as long as they are kept dry, are always in good condition, even ten years hence. A good plan is to have both. Those that are in constant demand may be in tubes, while those colors only used sparingly and occasionally could be in powder. This, perhaps, would be the more economical.

The basis of all colors used in overglaze porcelain painting is produced from the oxides of various metals, hence they are called mineral paints. For instance, the reds are made from iron, the greens from chromium, the blues from cobalt, yellows and browns from antimony, uranium and iron, and the carmines, purples and crimsons from gold. Of course these are more or less modified with other minerals to produce various shades.

It will perhaps not occur to the amateur china-painter that it is useless to try and mix any two or three of these colors together to produce another. For instance, while a combination of blue and yellow make green in both oil and water colors, it is better not to try this with mineral colors. Of course this union will, in effect, be green; but, as the greens of the mineral palette are made from a metal that produces green, much better shades can be purchased than can be made on the palette. Besides, it sometimes happens that a mixture of two or three minerals will produce in the kiln an entirely different result from the one expected. Therefore it is wiser to supply yourself from the manufacturer with the variety of greens necessary, rather than trust to luck. You cannot hope to obtain some of the bright vivid greens otherwise. The same argument holds good in regard to purples, although with not the same force, because a very pretty shade can be made with deep-blue green and carmine. But, after all, there is no motive for doing this, and no economy. Better leave this part of the business to the color man, who understands his business, has all the proper appurtenances for weighing and compounding, and with great accuracy only, and after many experiments, places on the market the results of his labors.

One rule I firmly believe in is not to starve your palette, or try and make one color do duty for several.

As we said before (in July), these colors may be modified with each other to any required degree; but, in the first place, buy your colors in a pure state.

In the matter of grays, however, it is better to make these than buy them ready-made.

Grays are absolutely necessary in all painting, and the most harmonious may be obtained by a judicious mixing of colors already in use. Red, blue and yellow will always produce a gray. There are many mineral colors of which it only requires two to make beautiful gray tones. Apple-green and carmine, violet of iron and deep-blue green, deep purple and dark green No. 7, and blue and orange are very useful for grays. The first-mentioned combination is a soft, delicate, pearly tone, useful for pink flowers. The second is stronger, and will shade all blue flowers nicely. It is good for painting clouds also. The next is a very dark, strong tint, and must be used with caution. The last-named, blue and orange, is apt to be confusing until it is definitely stated that "orange" is not "orange yellow," on the contrary, is a dull shade of brown, verging on to a fawn color. It can only be obtained in powder form, and is called best orange. This with either celestial blue or deep-blue green makes a very desirable gray, especially in producing the greenish tones for white flowers or drapery.

Never paint without grays. This is imperative. If you cannot trust yourself to mix them, buy them, then, "ready-made." Bought grays are away ahead of no grays at all, so necessary are they. The names of the ready-made grays are: pearl gray No. 6, a very pale tint that fires away considerably; gray No. 1, a darker color; gray No. 2 is of a yellowish tone; and neutral gray, a dark, cold, intense color, that is useful only when modified with some other color. These, with a warm gray, which is decidedly pinkish, are all for which you can find any possible use.

Carmines are four in number, with corresponding degrees of color: carmine tendre, a very delicate shade; then come carmine Nos. 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Never attempt to make a dark pink or crimson by painting strongly with any of the carmines. While they make the most beautiful pure pinks, they are all delicate tones. When you want a dark shade, use ruby purple, rather than pile on the carmines. In the first place the carmine, if applied heavy or thick, would surely blister. In the second, it would require such intense heat to develop, that other colors might suffer in the same kiln.

Carmine has always been considered a test color with professional firers. When this color has developed, then other colors have. But if carmine comes from the kiln yellowish in tint, it is not fired enough; if of a bluish tinge, it has been over-fired. In the case of under-firing, another and a stronger firing will restore it. In the other case, it is irremediable—the color has been destroyed and is gone forever. Sometimes a thin wash of carnation No. 1, and given a light fire, will improve this.

Carmines are used for all pink flowers.

There are many who are prejudiced against using carmine because it is a difficult color to lay smoothly (as are all the colors made from gold), and because it is not always fired properly. When applied and fired intelligently, it is a most perfect and satisfactory pink, otherwise it is very ugly, and this accounts for many discarding it from their palettes. Ruby purple is a deep rich brilliant crimson, and equal care must be bestowed upon it as upon the carmines.

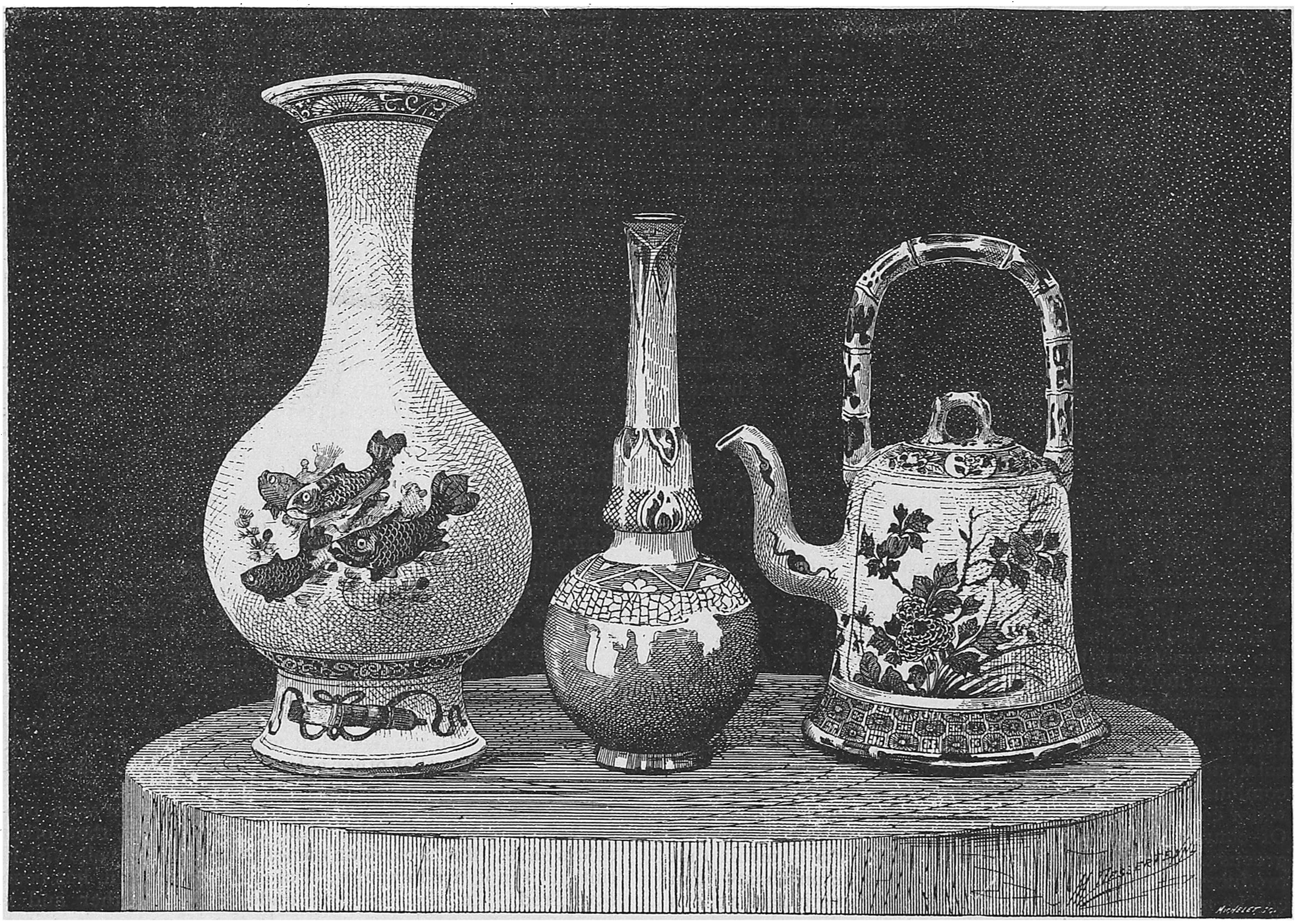
The word "purple," as applied to mineral colors, implies a crimson, and not, as we understand a purple, to mean the purple of a pansy. This color is known as violet—of which there are two shades, deep and light. The deep is bluish in tone and the light of a pinkish shade. The other purples are crimson purple and deep purple, neither so brilliant as ruby, and both darker; and, if provided with ruby, these two are not essential.

Deep violet of gold gives satisfactory results when modified with blue, and the light violet of gold with carmine. With these three colors a very wide gamut of shades is possible.

In the matter of blues, deep blue-green answers for nearly every purpose, except where a heavy, dark color is desired. Deep blue-green is exceedingly pure in quality, and, whether applied in delicate thin washes, or its full strength, is always pretty, always satisfactory. If a deep blue is required, a blue riche is good. There are, however, several to select from, and a sample plate will always be shown, if requested.

The iron reds that are necessary are deep red-brown, carnation No. 1, and violet of iron.

Amateurs frequently make a disappointing blunder with this last-named color, confusing it with violet of gold. They are altogether different in color and results. One is the oxide of iron, and is of a dull low tone of red; the other the oxide of gold, and is of a brilliant purple pansy color.



Decorated Japanese Porcelain.

Carnation is frequently used to paint pink flowers by using very thin. It is a bright, vivid red, and, mixed with an equal part of ivory yellow and yellow for mixing, makes a good shade of salmon or shrimp pink. Carnation should be highly fluxed when used thin. When fired strongly it is apt to fire away somewhat, and if given only a light fire it may all wipe off.

Flux is not a color (as it is white), although it comes prepared ready for use as a color, and is looked upon as quite as necessary as color. It should be added to all colors, if they are to be used very thin; and to some others at all times, especially blues and browns.

It is the medium by which the color is united in the kiln to the glaze of the china, and, added to those colors that are deficient in glaze, it gives a beautiful, brilliant lustre, that otherwise they would not have.

There is a way to avoid using it and obtain the same results as to glaze, and that is, to add in its stead some one of the softer colors—pearl-gray, sky-blue, or ivory-yellow, for instance. The first does not materially change a color, as only a little should be used, and after firing it almost disappears.

Sky-blue could be added to all blues and violets, and ivory-yellow to red, yellows and browns. This obviates using any flux, as, being soft colors—that is, fusing at a low temperature—they give a glaze to the colors that are poor in this quality. With the exercise of a little thought and careful manipulation some one of these colors could be introduced nearly always with advantage.

Only three yellows are necessary—ivory-yellow, a very pale tint; yellow for mixing, a brighter shade, very useful in modifying all greens; and silver-yellow, a deep, rich, almost orange color. The next shade deeper and brighter is orange-yellow, but it is such a strong color that it devours other colors with which it is mixed in the kiln, with very provoking results. I find silver-yellow to answer all purposes where a deep color is wanted.

Beware of mixing yellows with the reds—always measure the proportions of each, and have a sample of your mixture fired before using. The yellows have a fashion of eating up the reds, and, although before firing you may have exactly the shade you are striving for, the chances are, if there is a predominance of yellow, you will be grievously disappointed after the firing.

It is advisable to make experiments continually. Keep an exact memoranda of each, and number your fired samples to correspond. These will prove very useful. Apply your mixed colors to pieces of broken china, and firers, as a rule, do not charge for firing these samples.

(To be Continued.)